

them. I am not saying let's take action against them for precipitous reasons or reasons that are not well thought out. I am saying we must respond to these continued reports from the Rumsfeld Commission, from the Cox Commission, from our biennial intelligence assessments, from these reports from our own envoys coming back saying the Chinese are basically telling us to get lost. We know what they are doing, and they are apparently not even denying it anymore. And we are going to approve PNTR without even taking up this issue?

We are trying to get a vote on this bill. So far we have been unable to do so. I ask my colleagues to seriously consider what kind of signal we are going to be sending. We talk a lot about signals around here. I ask what kind of signal we are going to be sending to the Chinese Government, to our allies, to the rest of the world, if we are not willing to take steps to defend ourselves? A great country that is unwilling to defend itself will not be a great country forever.

I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, in less than 10 minutes, under the previous order, the Senate will move on to another subject. We have completed opening statements on the Interior appropriations bill. The two Senators from Minnesota have offered an amendment, and we have had notice of several others.

This is simply to announce to my colleagues that sometime tomorrow—I hope relatively early tomorrow—we trust we will be in a position to make a unanimous consent request stating that there is a deadline for the filing of amendments. I do believe we will be able to begin to discuss actual amendments fairly promptly tomorrow morning, but as the majority leader said, in the evenings from now on, we will move to the Defense authorization bill. So Members who wish their amendments to be considered should notify both managers as promptly as possible, should file those amendments as promptly as possible, and should begin to arrange with the managers for times relatively convenient to all concerned to bring them up.

The majority leader would like to finish this bill tomorrow. I must say that I join him fervently in that wish, a wish that is not, however, a prediction. Nonetheless, a great deal remains to be done this week. The more promptly Members can come to the floor with their amendments and see whether or not we can deal with them informally or whether they will require a vote the better off all Members of the Senate will be. It is doubtful we will get anything more accomplished be-

tween now and 3:30, however. So at this point I will suggest the absence of a quorum and will ask that it be called off at 3:30 so we can move to the next matter of business. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I will use my leader time to make a couple of comments.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I welcome everyone back from our week away for the Fourth of July recess. I did not have an opportunity to talk this morning with the majority leader, and I understand he was able to come to the floor and indicate there is a lot of work to be done, and I share his view about the extent to which work should be done.

I hope we can work as productively this coming work period as we worked in the last work period. We had an arrangement that I think worked very well following an unfortunate confrontation prior to the time we went away for the Memorial Day recess. The cooperation and partnership that was demonstrated over this last work period is one that I hope we can model again.

I say that because I am concerned about the precarious way with which we are starting this week. Senator LOTT has filed a cloture motion on the motion to proceed to the estate tax, and then it is my understanding his intention is to file a cloture motion on the bill itself. I remind my colleagues that is exactly what got us into the position we were in prior to the Memorial Day recess. I hope we can work through that.

I have offered Senator LOTT a limit on the number of amendments to the estate tax bill and a time limit on the amendment. I am very disappointed that we are not able to do what we have been able to do on so many bills, and that is reach some sort of accommodation for both sides. We still have some time this week, and I am hopeful that will happen.

Let me also say that I am increasingly not only concerned but alarmed that we have yet to schedule a date certain for the consideration of permanent normal trade relations with China. I had a clear understanding we would take up the bill this month. Yet I am told now that at a Republican staff meeting today there was a good deal of discussion about the need to move it to September.

I inform my colleagues that we will ask unanimous consent to take up PNTR. If that fails, at some point this

week, we will actually make a motion to proceed to PNTR by a time certain this month. We cannot fail to act on that issue any longer. We must act. So we will make that motion to proceed to PNTR if the majority leader chooses not to make the motion for whatever reason.

I will also say that, as he has indicated, there is a good deal of business left undone that, for whatever reason, has been blocked by some of our colleagues on the other side. We will want to address those issues as well.

We will offer a motion to proceed to the Patients' Bill of Rights. We will certainly want to do that, as well as prescription drugs, minimum wage, and a number of issues relating to common sense gun legislation, such as closing the so-called gun show loophole and dealing with the incremental approaches to gun safety that the Senate supported as part of the juvenile justice bill.

I will say, we will also want to move to proceed to the H-1B legislation that passed in the House overwhelmingly. We want to be able to offer amendments. We would like to take it up. It should happen this week; if not this week, next week. But we ought to take up H-1B as well.

You could call this week the "Trillion Dollar Week," the Trillion Dollar Week because our Republican colleagues are choosing to ignore all of the legislation I have just noted, given the limited time we have, and instead commit this country to \$1 trillion in two tax cuts relating, first, to the marriage penalty, which we are told by CBO would cost a little over \$250 billion over a 10-year period of time; and the estate tax repeal, which, over a fully implemented 10-year period, costs \$750 billion.

That is \$1 trillion dealing with just two issues: the estate tax and the marriage penalty. It does not even go to the array of other tax-related questions that some of our Republican colleagues have addressed in the past. We could be up into \$3 or \$4 trillion worth of tax cuts if all of the tax proposals made by our Republican colleagues were enacted. But we may want to call this the "Trillion Dollar Week" if our Republican colleagues have their way: \$750 billion on the estate tax; \$250 billion on the marriage tax penalty—and, I will say, \$1 trillion, with very limited debate, with no real opportunity to offer amendments, with no real suggestion about whether or not we ought to have at least the right to offer alternatives to spending that much money.

The Democrats believe very strongly in the need to ensure that small businesses and farms are protected and that the ability is provided to transfer small businesses and farms. But we can do that for a lot less than \$750 billion. We believe very strongly in the importance of the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. But we do not have to spend \$250 billion to deal with it.